

(The instruments are listed in the order in which they are played.)

(The audience is requested not to applaud until the end of each numbered section.)

1. THE RENAISSANCE COURTS OF ITALY

frottola: L'amor donna, chio te porto

Anon. 16th century

The frottola was one of the new literary and musical forms of the Italian renaissance which flourished particularly at the court of Mantua under the patronage of Isabella d'Este. There, Isabella assiduously cultivated young Italian poets and composers to rival those at other European courts. Instead of imitating the French chanson they developed the frottola, a vigorous new form with its roots in the gaiety of the Italian language and people. "L'amor donna" says: "The love, dear lady, that I hold for you, gladly would I declare."

madrigal: Madonna qual certezza

Philippe Verdelot (d. 1567)

Verdelot was a Flemish composer who spend most of his working life in Italy. His first published work appeared in Rome in 1526, and he was later a singer at St. Mark's, Venice, and "maestro de musica" of San Giovanni in Florence. Verdelot's "madrigals" belong to a transitional type — somewhere between the early frottolas and the fully developed Italian madrigal of the late sixteenth century. "Madonna qual certezza" belongs to a set of madrigals and motets assembled in Florence about the year 1528, and in which Verdelot is the principal composer. The part books were sent as a gift or musical embassy to the English court of Henry VIII and Verdelot's madrigals must have been the first of their kind to reach England.

Our performance includes a decorated lute part by the Paduan lutenist Melchior Barberis which was published in 1546. "Madonna qual certezza" says: "My lady, what greater certainty of my ardour can there be than to behold how I gradually consume away? Do you not realise that after I fell into your snare I blush, I blanch, I burn, I freeze? My lady, what greater certainty . . ."

Contrapunto II

Vincenzo Galilei (c. 1520-1591)

Galilei, father of the astronomer Galileo Galilei, was a member of the famous "Camerata": the courtly circle of poets and composers who met regularly at the house of Count Bardi in Florence in the 1580's and 90's. Their discussions covered every aspect of musical theory and practice and paved the way for the new operatic styles of the seventeenth century. This "contrapunto," from "El Fronimo" (1584) is a delightful exercise in melodic ornamentation rather than counterpoint.

canzonetta: Lieta per honorarte

Matteo Rampolini (16th century)

Although little is known of the composer, a great deal is known about the occasion for which this piece was written. It was part of the splendid festivities held at Florence to celebrate the wedding of Cosimo I de Medici to Eleanor da Toledo in 1539. The bride entered Florence on Sunday, June 29th, to the accompaniment of a madrigal in eight parts sung by a chorus of twenty-four voices doubled by four cornetts and four trombones, all placed on top of the city gate. And that marked the start of celebrations which continued for a week and included banquets, processions, pageants, plays and music of all kinds. After the wedding banquet on Sunday, July 6th, a pageant was performed in front of the tables, representing Florence and other nearby cities. A contemporary account reads:

"All these nymphs were bearing presents, made of sugar and dyed a natural colour. Also of sugar were the plates, basins and other containers holding the presents. When Apollo's singing was finished, Pisa, with her nymphs began the following canzonetta: Happy to honour you, here my Lord, is the ancient noble Pisa. These nymphs I have with me pray that Heaven will always shine on you."

2. **THE COURTS OF MAXIMILIAN I, HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR (reigned 1493-1519).**

Maximilian I outdid all rivals in his lavish patronage of the arts at the courts he established in Innsbruck, Vienna and Augsburg. Although in many ways unpleasant politically, Maximilian fully understood the advantages of employing the best musicians and artists of his time to sing his praises. In 1496 he established the "Hofkapelle" in the Hofburg in Vienna, which continues to the present day as the Vienna Boys' Choir. Another lasting memorial is the famous "Triumph of Maximilian" – a design for a triumphal procession with woodcuts by Burghmair, Durer and others. The "Triumph" is typical of the grandiose projects which Maximilian devised for his own self glorification.

lied: Nach willen dein Paul Hofhaimer (1459-1537)

Hofhaimer became one of the leading organists of his time and was in high favour with Maximilian. He frequently accompanied the Emperor on his journeys and is depicted playing the organ in the "Triumph" mentioned above. In 1515 Hofhaimer was created a knight of the Golden Spur by King Ladislas of Hungary and was raised to the rank of the nobility by the Emperor himself.

Curiously little of Hofhaimer's organ music remains: no doubt much of his performing skill relied on improvisation. A number of his songs have survived, and seem to have been very popular. "Nach willen dein" is a love song in which the identity of the beloved is kept hidden. "If it pleases you I shall keep faith with you alone – I am yours forever. If you are willing to accept me our secret will be kept hidden." The mention of the alphabet (ABC) and the repeated letters ABC in the tenor part evidently provide a clue to solve the riddle.

Our performance follows a vocal version by a decorated instrumental one, using ornaments from contemporary versions of the song by Hans Kotter and Hans Newsidler.

lied: Ach Elslein, liebes Elselein set by Ludwig Senfl (d. 1553)

Senfl was one of the early pupils at the Hofburg choir school. He later became a counter tenor in the choir and deputised for Isaac when the latter was away. He officially succeeded to the post of court composer in 1517. "Ach Elslein" was one of the most popular tunes of the day and was set many times in songs and quodlibets of all kinds. We have juxtaposed vocal and lute solo versions. "Oh Elslein, my dearest Elselein, how I wish I were with you. But two deep waters lie between you and me."

tenor lied: Was wird es doch Ludwig Senfl

Senfl was the outstanding exponent of the "tenor lied" – the characteristic German song form of the period in which the melody is set in an inner part and surrounded by an often ingenious web of instrumental polyphony. "Indeed how strange life is becoming: the way it is now, the world is full of cunning and surrounded by deceit!"

lied: Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen Heinrich Isaac (c. 1450-1517)

Flemish by birth, Isaac spent most of his life abroad in the service of two royal masters: first Lorenzo di Medici whom he served in Florence until 1494, and then Maximilian who employed him as court composer for the last twenty years of his life. The Emperor must have held Isaac in high regard for he allowed him to leave Austria and settle in Florence in 1515 – and yet continued to pay him a salary until Isaac's death two years later. The words of Isaac's most famous song are attributed to the Emperor Maximilian himself. "Innsbruck I must leave thee to tread new paths into foreign lands. My joy has left me never to return. In sadness I depart."

lied: Die vollen Bruedren Anon. 16th century

A rather irreverent drinking song. "The drunken friars were never empty, day or night. They drank and feasted right through the Mass and they certainly know how to make the best wines. Carousing and revelry is their motto."

3. THE SPANISH COURT BEFORE THE ARMADA

"Los Reyes Catolicos" was the name given to Ferdinand and Isabella who united Castile and Aragon in 1474 and laid the foundations of modern Spain. Their reign ushered in a golden age which included not only conquest and discovery (1492 saw the Moors finally driven from Spanish soil as well as Columbus' American expedition) but a rich flowering of music, literature and art. Much of the music is a mixture of courtly elegance with the infectious spirit of popular song.

Danza alta

Francisco de la Torre (late 15th century)

This dance is a saltarello, one of the types of basse danse which was the principal court dance of Ferdinand and Isabella's time. It is based on the popular melody "La Spagna" heard in the tenor part. The real musical interest, however, lies in the upper part which was usually improvised: this basse danse is unusual precisely because all the parts were written down. Francesco de la Torre was a singer in Ferdinand's royal chapel from about 1483 to 1494.

villancico: Virgen, bendita sin par

Pedro de Escobar (early 16th century)

Escobar was "maestro de capilla" at Seville Cathedral during the period 1507-1514. This villancico would have been for court rather than church performance and comes from the principal court song book of the time, the "Cancionero Musical de Palacio."

"Blessed Virgin, beyond compare, from whom all virtues stem, you are worthy to be praised. Holy Empress you have corrected the errors and cured the sufferings of the sinful. May you bring grace from the Angels to prevent us from sin. Blessed Virgin. . . ."

Two recercadas from the Tratado de Glosas

Diego Ortiz (b. 1525)

Ortiz's book, published in Rome in 1553, tells you not only how to play the viol, but also how to improvise divisions over a set bass pattern. Like horse riding, playing the viol was a popular aristocratic pastime (Castiglione recommends it in his famous "El Cortesano" 1561) and it can be seen that both activities require a similar sitting position.

lute solo: la Cancion del Emperador

set by Luys de Narvaez (16th century)

Narvaez was one of Charles V's royal lutenists: this piece comes from his "Los seys libros" published in 1538. Narvaez includes a wide variety of pieces: arrangements of ensemble music — even motets and mass — sections, by Flemish, French and Italian composers as well as Spanish. The "Cancion del Emperador" is a beautiful arrangement of one of the most popular chansons by Josquin des Pres: "Mille regretz." Josquin was the most admired foreign composer in Spain, and actually turns up himself in the Palace Songbook as Jusquin d'Ascanio.

estrambote: Fata la parte

Juan del Encina (1469-1529)

Juan del Encina has earned a place in the history of Spanish music, literature and drama. In 1492 he entered the service of the Duke of Alba as a sort of director of entertainments. The "representaciones" or little plays which Encina wrote and performed for the Duke and his guests are generally considered the starting point for Spanish secular drama. He also probably wrote many of the texts of his own songs. "Fata la parte" has a tragic theme. "Let it be known that Micer Cotal has killed his wife. He found her alone in his house with a Spaniard who was clever enough to escape." But Encina's rumbustious ballad-style setting is anything but serious.

INTERMISSION

THE COURT OF BURGUNDY IN THE TIME OF PHILIP THE GOOD

Something of the pomp and ceremony of the Burgundian court during the time of Philip the Good (1419-67) can be appreciated from one of its most famous festivities: the so-called Feast of the Pheasant which took place on Sunday, February 17th, 1454. During the previous year Constantinople had fallen to the Turks, and Duke Philip was filled with a crusading zeal to become the champion of Christendom and recapture the city. The Feast of the Pheasant was organised as a public relations exercise to whip up enthusiasm amongst the nobility of western Europe, most of whom seem to have been invited for the occasion. The exotic nature of the entertainment was chronicled by Olivier de la Marche who was partly responsible for arranging the striking visual and musical effects. These included a church on wheels containing three choir boys, a tenor and some small organs, a replica of a Flemish ship in port complete with its crew and a pie in the form of a castle containing twenty-eight musicians who sang and played recorders, rebecs, lutes, horns, doucaines, bagpipes, and a German cornett. But the pièce de résistance was left till last. No less a creature than an elephant entered the hall, bearing on its back a woman in white robes. This was Olivier de Marche himself, representing Mother Church at the mercy of the Infidel (the elephant) and begging for assistance. In spite of the bizarre setting, the listeners' hearts must have been moved by the concluding performance: Dufay's motet *Lamentatio Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* in which de la Marche sang the French words of the cantus part in falsetto. It is most probable that both Dufay and Binchois were present on this memorable occasion; certainly their association with the court of Philip the Good had been long and fruitful. Both composers were born of Walloon stock in about the year 1400 and both took holy orders. Some of Dufay's earliest musical experiences must have been at Cambrai Cathedral where he was an altar boy. His subsequent career was in every sense an international one, serving various patrons in Paris, Rimini, Laon, Bologna, Savoy and Rome as well as Philip himself. Binchois seems to have travelled much less and he was continuously in the service of the Burgundian court for the last thirty years of his life.

chanson: *Files a marier*

Gilles Binchois (c. 1400-1460)

You girls of marrying age, don't you marry. For if there's any jealousy, neither you or he will ever be happy.

ballade: *Deuil angoisseus*

Gilles Binchois

It is difficult to see why Ockeghem called Binchois "le père de Joyeuseté" or why modern writers so often describe his music as "comfortable" or "bourgeois." Binchois wrote very little jolly music and the wistful melody of *Deuil angoisseus* (here performed in an instrumental version) is far more typical of him than the better known "*Files a marier*."

basse danse: *Las Spagna*

Anon. 15th century

This is a splendid four part setting based on the tenor melody already heard in de la Torre's *Alta*. This setting is more elaborately polyphonic with constantly shifting cross rhythms.

motet: *Lamentatio Sanctae Matris Constantinopolitanae* Guillaume Dufay (c. 1400-1474)

Source of all hope, most merciful father of my son, I, his sorrowful mother, come before your mighty court to indict both your power and mankind for allowing my son, who was such a credit to me, to suffer such dire pain.

For this reason I am sick at heart and full of care. Yet none will listen to my pleas. So I bring to you, one and only God, my complaint of the grievous suffering and pain that the finest man that ever was endures without a shred of human comfort.

5. THE PAPAL COURT AT AVIGNON

Avignon was the seat of the Papacy from 1309 to 1377. It became renowned as a place of learning and culture and attracted poets, artists and musicians not only from France but from other countries too, especially Italy. The great Italian painter Simone Martini made his home there and so did the poet and humanist Petrarch. The worldliness and luxury which turned the papal court at Avignon into a legend in its own time led Petrarch to compare it to Babylon. During the rivalry of the Papal Schism (1378-1417) the Avignon Popes had strong political reasons for encouraging the arts in order to strengthen their own prestige. Against this extravagant and bizarre background there developed a school of composers whose style became on occasions equally extravagant and bizarre.

virelai: Contre le temps

Anon. late 14th century

A witty piece of word painting in which the two upper parts indulge in vigorous hemiolas which are literally "against the time." This makes a play upon words with the title which in its poetic context means: "In keeping with the fine and pleasant weather, I shall lead a gay and carefree life, out of love for my sweet lover, whom I adore with all my heart."

virelai: He, tres doulz roussignol

Borlet (late 14th century)

Another imitative piece, this time based on what is probably a folk tune: "Roussignolet du bois" heard in the tenor. The two additional musical lines turn the nightingale into the most tender and thoughtful creature imaginable.

Oh, most lovely nightingale, singing,
ôccy, occy, occy, please be off
without delay, I beg of you, and go
to my fair lady and assure her on my
behalf that she will have
killed me, unless her cold heart
melts.

Lark flying so high and singing
so clear and sweet a song, lire,
liron, you must wing your way
to my lady and tell her at once with
my song that my heart pines for her,
lire, liron.

dance: Saltarello

Anon. late 14th century

This long saltarello is constructed on the same principle of repeated sections as the estampie, the main court dance of the Middle Ages. This example comes from a manuscript bearing the coat of arms of the Medici family.

6. THE COURTLY ART OF THE TROUVERES

The trouvères were the northern French successors of the Provençal troubadours. Their art is said to have been introduced into Northern France by Eleanor of Aquitaine who married the French prince subsequently to become King Louis XII. She was the patron of many musicians and held regular "Courts of Love" where the ethics of "amour courtois" were debated and the problems of actual love affairs discussed. The courtly ethic which the troubadours had evolved was very much an aristocratic one. Consequently the code owes a great deal to feudalism. Love is seen in terms of "service," which is closely modelled on the service which a vassal owes his lord. The poet sees himself as the lady's humble and obedient servant often referring to her as his sovereign. The text of Adam de la Halle's rondeau is typical not only of his generation of poet-musicians, but of those of the next two hundred years.

rondeau: Tant con je vivrai

Adam de la Halle (late 13th century)

"As long as I live I shall love no other but you. Rather I shall serve you: loyally have I given myself wholly to you. As long as I live. . . ."

virelai: Fines amourettes ai

Adam de la Halle

Adam de la Halle was the first composer to experiment with polyphonic settings of the standard troubadour song forms, paving the way for Machaut and the next generation of French composers. "Fines amourettes ai" is a charming pastoral piece whose light touch is reminiscent of Adam de la Halle's own "pastourelle," "Le Jeu de Robin et Marion." The poet exclaims at his fine love affair and his sweet and pretty lady. But he concludes that perhaps it would be better to give her up: then he can still treasure her memory and her honour will remain intact.

chanson: Quant je voy yver retorner

Colin Muset (13th century)

This song describes the plight of the thirteenth century professional musician: hungry, penniless, homeless and facing a cold winter, a situation not unknown to musicians of more recent times.

"When I see winter return I must find a lodging: if only I could discover a generous host who would charge me nothing and who would have pork and beef and mutton, ducks, pheasants and venison, fat hens and capons and good cheeses in baskets."

Danse royale

Chanson pieuse

Danse royale

Anon. 13th century

Thibaut King of Navarre (1201-53)

Anon. 13th century

The last three pieces are typical of the lighter dance music of the trouvères. The danse royale belongs to the estampie type and comes in a manuscript together with a set of eight "royal" estampies. Thibaut of Champagne, who was one of the most important of the later trouvères, became King of Navarre in 1234.

Notes: David Munrow (*copyright*)

Next Event: Sunday, March 21, 1976 at 3 p.m.
University of Toronto Concert Band
Conductor: Stephen Chenette